

BISHOP GROSSETESTE UNIVERSITY

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

MONDAY 30<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013  
1:30 PM IN ROOM 2/3 BGFUTURES

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**Present:**

Mr David Babb  
The Very Rev'd Philip Buckler  
Mr Jamie Caress  
Mr David Clements  
Mr Richard Corn  
Mrs Sandra Grattrick  
Mr Graham Meeson  
Ms Haf Merrifield  
Mr Roger Mosey (Chair)  
Rev'd Sally Myers  
Rev Professor Peter Neil  
Mrs Jasmit Phull  
Mrs Bridget Starling  
Mr James Turner  
Mrs Lucy Wood

**In attendance:**

Mr Nigel Appleton, Dean of School of Teacher Development  
Mr Stephen Deville, Director of Resources  
Rev'd Peter Green, Dean of Chapel and University Chaplain (up to item 3)  
Mr Rob Jones, Director of BG Enterprise  
Ms Vicky Mays, Clerk to University Council  
Dr Jenny Rees, Dean of Student and Academic Engagement  
Mr Nick Roberts, Students' Union Vice President 2013/14  
Dr Ruth Sayers, Dean of School of Culture, Education and Innovation  
Ms Alison Smith, Head of Human Resources (up to item 10)  
Mrs Emma Smeaton, University Council Administrator  
Mr Jamie Caress, Incoming Students' Union President 2013/14

**Observers:**

Mrs Valerie Hope  
Mr Henry Ruddock

**1. Welcome from the Chair**

The Chair welcomed members to his first meeting as Chair of the University Council noting that it was also the first meeting for the Students' Union President and Students' Union Vice President for 2013/14.

**2. The University Prayer**

Rev'd Peter Green, University Chaplain led the University Prayer.

**3. Chaplaincy update**

Council received the Chaplaincy report presented by the University Chaplain.

**4. Declarations of interest**

The Chair declared his recent change of role from Editorial Director at the BBC to Master of Selwyn College, Cambridge.

**5. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Dr Kevin Brown, Dr Tony Hill, Bishop Christopher Lowson, Dr Jim Smith and Professor Mark Thompson.

**6. Election of Vice Chair**

It was reported that Dr Tony Hill had been nominated for the role of Vice Chair of University Council. All agreed to elect to Dr Hill for the role.

**7. Minutes of the last meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2013 were accepted as a true record of the meeting and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

**8. Matters arising****(i) Annual return of FRS8 forms**

Council were reminded to return the FRS8 forms distributed with the agenda to Emma Smeaton, University Council Administrator.

(ii) Update of Council member contact details

Members were asked to ensure that all their details were fully up to date and if they hadn't already done so to complete the following forms and return them to the University Council Administrator:

- Declaration to the University Council;
- University Council member's contact details; and
- The skills matrix.

These forms would be available at the end of the meeting.

**9. Overview of current higher education policy and environment**

The Deputy Vice Chancellor gave a presentation to members on the higher education environment for BGU which covered the following:

- What's going on out there?
  - Where does the money come from and how might that change?
  - To whom are we answerable?
  - How is the political context likely to develop?
  - What will our students and our community expect and need from us?
  - How are we preparing for the future?
- University finance: where does BGU's money come from?
- How reliant is BGU on teacher education?
- Accountability: to whom does BGU answer?
- Accountability: who do universities answer to?
- Impact of the HE funding changes on recruitment;
- Impact of the HE funding changes;
- Still a job to be done in the East and East Midlands;
- Variety and choice;
- A "market" for higher education: student as consumer (with Tripadvisor);
- A "market" for higher education: student as consumer;
- A new Strategy for 2014-19:
  - A Strategy not a document;
  - Clear vision and direction understood and embraced by whole BGU community;
  - High level but specific enough to provide a basis for making choices and to know if we've succeeded;
  - Agreed basis for operational planning, resourcing and investment decisions;
- Themes:
  - Context: demography; fiscal; policy; regulatory;
  - Ethos;
  - Portfolio: subjects and disciplines;
  - Portfolio: modes, levels and channels;
  - Research;
  - Learning and teaching;
  - Infrastructure; estates; plant; systems;
  - External relationships, partnership and community;

- Timeline:
  - August-October 2013: research and ideas in theme groups;
  - October 2013: testing: overlaps, gaps, consistency;
  - November 2013: emerging outcomes;
  - December 2013: refinement and drafting;
  - January-March 2014: confirmation, dissemination, implementation.

The presentation would be e-mailed to members following the meeting and the Deputy Vice Chancellor would provide details of how Council members could become involved in the strategy work before the next scheduled University Council in November if they wished.

HM

## 10. Overview of the results of the recent staff survey

The Head of Human Resources gave a presentation on the 2013 staff survey which had been conducted during June/July. A staff survey was typically conducted every 2-3 years and this most recent survey had been conducted by Capita Surveys and Research who ensured staff anonymity and were able to access results from other institutions.

The presentation highlighted the following:

- Response rates, with and overall response rate of 91% from core staff;
- Highlights:
  - Very high response rate;
  - Ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of 37 HEIs as an Employer of Choice;
  - Ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of 308 other Capita clients as an Employer of Choice;
- Key employee engagement and organisation climate indicators:
  - Positives, which included examples of questions to measure levels of employee satisfaction;
  - Could do better, which also included examples of questions;
- HEFCE had funded some research in the sector, producing research documents and some quotes were highlighted;
- Positive examples of how BGU compared with other HEIs, scoring higher than the sector norm;
- Negative examples of how BGU compared with other HEIs, scoring lower than the sector norm;
- Main areas of strength, scoring more than 75% of staff:
  - Equality and diversity;
  - Job satisfaction;
  - Roles and responsibility;
  - Team leader/line manager;
  - Working environment;
  - Culture and values;
- Areas for improvement:
  - Leadership team dealing with poor performance;
  - Leadership team listening and responding to the views of staff;
  - Communication across different parts of the University;
  - Work demands;
  - Managing change;
  - Bureaucracy;

- Next steps:
  - University Council's thoughts/comments on the overall findings they had seen so far;
  - Investigate Hub level results;
  - Report back the survey results to all staff;
  - Link actions to the results;
  - Aim for some quick wins whilst planning longer term actions;
- Ethos:
  - Strengths;
  - Weaknesses;
  - Opportunities;
  - Threats.

The Chair congratulated BGU on the staff survey results. It was noted that staff representatives felt that the results felt right and the results would be presented to the Informal Corporate Leadership Team followed by a dissemination and clarification event. A group of people would be pulled together to deal with the effectiveness and channels of communication, producing a mechanical and a cultural set of answers.

#### 11. Chair's business

The Chair noted that University Council agendas would change slightly for future meetings to ensure that main items were dealt with at the top of the agenda.

VM

It was reported that the Chair had recently met with the Chair of University Council and the Vice Chancellor at the University of Lincoln and it had been suggested that a relatively informal meeting between the two University Councils' took place on an annual basis with a view to developing a higher education strategy for Lincolnshire. All agreed that this was a positive step forward and the Clerk would liaise as appropriate.

VM

#### 12. Vice Chancellor's business

##### (i) Report

The Vice Chancellor presented his report to Council noting that his June report compared well to the results of the staff survey. The report covered the following areas:

##### *Wider context*

The Vice Chancellor reported that he was very grateful to the Deputy Vice Chancellor for her overview presentation to Council and also thanked individual members noting that it was very helpful to gain individual perspectives and looked forward to working with the University Council on the Strategy.

#### *Graduation*

A successful Graduation day was noted and a post-graduation evaluation had taken place providing some proposed changes for implementation next year.

#### *Structure*

It was reported that things had moved on and progress was still being made on creating a clear direction of travel for the University .

#### *Leadership*

The establishment of the Informal Corporate Leadership Team (ICLT) was noted.

#### *Rapid Improvement Event*

The Clerk to the University Council gave a brief update to members noting that the project had demonstrated a change in working collaboratively across institutional areas and how the project team had agreed on the current problems and had taken responsibility for agreeing and implementing the solutions.

#### *Staffing*

The appointment of a Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) was reported.

#### *Strategy*

It was noted that the main question to emerge from the Strategy working groups should be "What sort of University does BGU want to be?". The Chair reminded members that if they wanted to contribute they needed to be doing so now and to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor for further information.

#### *Recruitment*

A recruitment note as an appendices to the report would be discussed under item 12 (ii).

#### *Staff Survey*

This was previously discussed under item 10 of the agenda.

#### *National Student Survey*

The new approach to conducting next year's Survey was noted.

#### *League tables*

BGU's ranking in league tables was reported and the continued work in this area was noted.

#### *Internal communication*

The introduction of the Staff Portal was reported.

#### *Facilities*

The Director of BG Enterprise reported that the keys to the new dining facility, Refectory, would be received on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October and plans were in place to have it open later in that week.

#### *External communication*

The Chair reported on the high profile of the Chaplaincy which was functioning extremely well. It was noted that the Chaplain had proved to be a very supportive member of staff providing a strong pastoral role for colleagues.

#### (ii) Recruitment note

Members received the Recruitment Update paper prepared by the Deputy Vice Chancellor noting that recruitment was at an acceptable level but more students could have been taken. It was noted that there had been a shift in applicant behaviour and students were making their minds up much earlier about which university to choose which appeared to be typical of the whole sector.

### **13. Key items from sub-committees**

#### **Audit Committee**

The Chair of the Audit Committee reported on the meeting held earlier in the day prior to the University Council meeting noting the following:

- Final reports for 2012/13 received:
  - Invoicing, Income Receipting and Debt Collection Post Audit Review/Follow Up;
  - Review of eRecruitment;
  - Review of Environmental Issues;
- The draft Audit Programme for the academic year 2013/14 was approved;
- There was an update on year end accounts and current progress;
- The draft Audit Committee Annual Report was received and progress noted;
- It was reported that BGU's external auditors, Tenon, had gone into liquidation. The company had been taken over by Baker Tilley who would be conducting the external audits over the next few months. It was recommended by the Audit Committee that the external audit contract should be put out to tender. This was agreed by the University Council.

**14. Students' Union**

President's report

The Students' Union President report was received and presented by the Students' Union President for 2013/14 who noted that they were in the middle of welcome week and had noted an increase in attendance at daytime events. A collaborative link and networking opportunities with the University of Lincoln and Lincoln College had been developed and the recruitment of course representatives was underway. The Chair thanked the Students' Union for their very useful first report to Council.

**15. Senate**

Minutes from the 19<sup>th</sup> June meeting

The minutes of the meeting of Academic Board, now known as Senate, on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2013 were received and noted. It was reported that a further meeting of Senate had since taken place on the 24<sup>th</sup> September and these minutes would be presented to the Council at its next meeting in November.

**16. Honorary graduates**

Honorary Graduates 2014 update

It was reported that after consideration of the proposals from both Schools the following were recommended:

1. David Walliams in the first instance, followed by;
2. Grayson Perry;
3. Ursula Lidbetter;
4. Tim Lomas.

Members agreed these recommendations and were happy for the appropriate correspondence to be prepared and sent out.

PN

**17. Corporate Plan**

(i) Cover sheet

An introduction to the Corporate Plan 2010-15 noting the issue, recommendations and background was received.

(ii) Corporate Plan refresh

The September 2013 refresh was received and members noted that there were some adjustments to the Academic Engagement section of the Plan before it was to go public. It was reported that the Plan was only printed to order but an up to date version was required for the webpage.



**18. KPIs**

The Deputy Vice Chancellor presented the Key Performance Indicator dashboard reporting that the local media had been particularly good over the past six months or so, focussing on BGU as well as the University of Lincoln therefore resulting in progress. The Research downward arrow was an annual survey percentage result of research active staff and was due to the retirement of two key members of research staff. It was hopeful that new appointments would push this back up. Other main issues from the dashboard had already been covered on the agenda.

**19. Risk Register**

Members received the summary of institutional level top risks noting that the Senior Leadership Team had reported their top risks during an annual workshop. The paper was intended to be useful to Council reporting detailed narrative around all risks.

**20. Agenda suggestions for future meetings**

Suggestions for future agenda items were:

- BG Lincoln Limited;
- Current concerns and trying to mitigate these;
- Report from students re student satisfaction;
- Periodic report on formal complaints.

Members were reminded that if they had any further suggestions they should contact the Clerk to the University Council outside the meeting.

**21. Any other business**

The proposed agenda for next BG Lincoln Limited meeting to take place on 9<sup>th</sup> October was presented by the Director of BG Enterprise. It was noted that there were five board members with Dr Kevin Brown of the University Council acting as a communication line between the two. The minutes of the meeting would be reported to the University Council and they could add items to the agenda if they wished.

**12. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the University Council would take place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November at 1:30 pm to be preceded by lunch at 12:30 pm.

Signed  Date 20/11/13

